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SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EPET](#) [CASC](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: DELTA UPDATE FOR OCTOBER 1

REF: A. LAGOS 2013

[B](#). ABUJA 1675

[C](#). ABUJA 1673

[D](#). LAGOS 1998

[E](#). LAGOS 1982

[F](#). LAGOS 1978

[G](#). ABUJA 1656

[H](#). ABUJA 1486

[I](#). LAGOS 1892

[J](#). LAGOS 1820

Summary

[1](#). (SBU) The Port Harcourt area has been quiet and tensions have diminished from earlier this week as Nigeria celebrates October 1, its 44th Independence Day. Local press continues to report that the GON flew Niger Delta Vigilante Group (NDVG) leader Ateke Tom (the primary rival of Dokubo Asari) to Abuja for talks with the GON. In his Independence Day speech, President Obasanjo stated the need to engage in dialogue to resolve popular grievances in the Niger Delta, and deliver the dividends of democracy to the impoverished region. Indicating the GON was using a carrot and stick approach, press reports suggest the military has established a presence in Asari's home village.

Security Update

[2](#). (U) According to the local press, the GON flew the NDVG's Ateke Tom, to Abuja to widen the scope of the peace talks.

[3](#). (U) There are no reports of any fighting in the area. In several published interviews, Asari stated that peace talks had been cordial, but the duration of the cease-fire was contingent on the GON meeting his demands for a sovereign national conference and for significantly more local control over oil resources.

Reports from the Energy Sector

[4](#). (SBU) On October 1, the Shell Managing Director told us that the cease-fire seemed to be holding, and Port Harcourt was calm. An AGIP Security Manager confirmed that Port Harcourt was calm, and AGIP employees were going about their normal business. The Cooper Cameron Country Manager indicated their employees were also carrying out their normal activities. Late September 30, Chevron Texaco General Manager for Public and Government Affairs confirmed that the situation around Chevron Texaco facilities remained calm.

Press Report - Obasanjo: "A Rapprochement is Taking Place"

[5](#). (SBU) Local newspaper "This Day" published excerpts from President Obasanjo's Independence Day address. President Obasanjo emphasized the need to respond to grievances in the Delta region: "We are talking to those I described as rascally elements from the Niger Delta in the efforts to open lines of dialogue and peace as they feel aggrieved by their authorities." However, he stressed that the GON would not tolerate "acts that would mortgage or compromise the interests of the majority." He also reassured listeners that peace negotiations were continuing, while appealing to Delta officials to respond to the needs of their communities: "A rapprochement is taking place, and peace, stability and harmony will return to the Niger Delta. The obvious assessment so far is that not much impact has been made on the lives and living standards of most ordinary people of the Niger Delta. In the interest of security and stability of the Niger Delta in particular and Nigeria in general, I appeal to those elected official of the region whose efforts are not measured up to expectations, to endeavour to be seen to be more alive to their responsibilities and the plight of the people they are elected to govern." (Comment: To some extent, Obasanjo likely offered this explanation in an attempt, not only to reassure the public, but to respond to criticism that by opening dialogue with the militants, he was only encouraging future miscreancy. It is also noteworthy that he primarily blamed local and state elected officials for the sorry state of affairs in the Delta. End comment.)

[6](#). (SBU) However, signally that his government was using a

carrot and stick approach, the GON sent a not so subtle reminder to Asari and others. Newspapers report that a significant military presence has been established in Asari's village of Buguma.

ACS

[17](#). (SBU) No incidents involving AMCITs have been reported.
BROWNE